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Idaho National Lab is recognized for successful business outreach in Idaho

Idaho National Laboratory (INL) was recently recognized for its commitment to developing a supportive relationship with small businesses in Idaho. The 2007 Governor's Business Opportunity Conference, hosted in Boise by the Idaho Department of Commerce, brought the commitment of INL center stage. Idaho Lt. Gov. Jim Risch congratulated the INL Small Business Program for fostering the success of local enterprise.

Greg Wray, director of Supply Chain Management for INL, addressed the over 500 people who attended the conference about opportunities to partner with INL. However, it was the comments of Idaho's lieutenant governor that had a profound impact on Wray's perception of the laboratory's economic importance to the state.

"The lieutenant governor commented on his dealings with other states, and how, through those interactions, it is apparent that Idaho National Laboratory is a significant asset to the state of Idaho," Wray reflected. "We want the people of Idaho to recognize the value and benefits associated with Idaho National Laboratory and our commitment to Idaho."

Wray has watched the INL Small Business Program excel under the guidance of Dana Storms, Small Business Program manager. The program has grown and will continue to develop relationships that bring small businesses and INL together to strengthen Idaho's economy.

Storms said, "The 2006 Governor's Business Opportunity Conference held in Coeur d'Alene was the platform in which we introduced the INL Small Business Program to Idaho. This year we were able to highlight the program's successes and truly demonstrate our commitment to targeting businesses throughout Idaho to be part of the laboratory."

An example of this commitment is that during Fiscal Year 2007, INL awarded more than \$135 million in small business subcontracts, and more than \$107 million of the total was spent with Idaho-based businesses.

She explained that the vision of the small business program is to target, shape and retain small businesses to help INL become a pre-eminent world-class nuclear laboratory. This vision can be met through new and improved business practices. The program also takes unconventional approaches to match INL with small businesses that best support INL's needs.

An example of this is a business matching conference INL hosts that can best be described as "speed dating" for corporations. Large and small businesses are invited to the conference and given limited time to form partnerships with one another to make a proposal to provide INL with specific services. The matching of small and large companies which, by themselves, may not have all the resources to bid on work, allows them to pool skills and expertise to seek an INL contract.

Contact information for small businesses in Idaho Falls and Couer d'Alene that have worked with INL is available upon request.

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